



## County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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Chief Executive Officer

July 15, 2020

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From: Sachi A. Hamai  
Chief Executive Officer

### **SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) WEEKEND HOMELESS OUTREACH (ITEM NO. 2, AGENDA OF MAY 15, 2018)**

On May 15, 2018, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed the Chief Executive Office (CEO), in conjunction with the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) and the Department of Health Services (DHS), to:

- 1) Allocate funding to support one additional LAHSA homeless engagement team (HET) on weekends in Service Planning Area (SPA) 3;
- 2) Report back in 30 days with a countywide implementation plan to reserve a number of shelter beds and/or motel vouchers for individuals engaged by weekend HET;
- 3) Report back every six months with data on weekend outreach; and
- 4) Report back in 60 days with recommendations for effective models for expanding access to services and interim housing outside of normal business hours.

On July 23, 2018, the CEO provided its initial report to your Board. The response addressed Directives 1, 2, and 4. This memorandum serves as the third six-month report on weekend outreach in response to Directive 3 above.

Since the November 2019 weekend outreach update, the Measure H-funded weekend HET continued to provide essential outreach, including daily continuity of care services for the most vulnerable people experiencing homelessness (PEH). The weekend HET are often mobilized to support PEH during weekend weather and wildfire emergencies.

The critical need for weekend outreach teams has never been more clearly demonstrated than with the onset and subsequent emergent response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The dedicated weekend outreach workforce has been essential in monitoring the wellness of high-risk COVID vulnerable and COVID+ individuals sheltering in place on the streets; providing COVID-19+ test results which have often resulted in the coordination of weekend quarantine/isolation placements; relocating individuals into Project Roomkey (PRK) and other shelter options during the weekends; and distributing weekend meals throughout the County.

The attached report provides the following information on weekend outreach:

- Implementation status of weekend outreach teams  
Currently, all eight SPA weekend outreach teams are fully staffed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, DHS has added more medical staff to the weekend multidisciplinary teams.
- Weekend outreach collaboration and capacity building efforts  
The attached report details how weekend outreach teams work to ensure that the needs of PEH are met in a fluid fashion across the County. Highlighted are ongoing training/technical assistance provided to weekend outreach staff, and specific examples of the teams working in collaboration to address the needs of PEH suffering from COVID-19 symptoms.
- Weekend outreach and engagement overview  
The report describes a recently- developed smartphone app, HOTSpot, launched in April 2020. The app is the first-of-its-kind and allows outreach teams to do wellness checks, identify COVID-19 symptomatic and vulnerable PEH, and triage them to the most appropriate resource (e.g., 911, isolation/quarantine sites, Project Roomkey). In addition, the report provides specific details on services provided by weekend teams and an overview of activities by SPA.
- Weekend engagement performance metrics  
Outcomes and COVID-19 services provided by weekend outreach teams are provided in two tables.

The CEO, in conjunction with LAHSA and DHS, will provide the Board with the next 6-month report by December 30, 2020. If you have any questions, please contact Phil Ansell, Homeless Initiative Director, at 213-974-1752 or by email at [pansell@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:pansell@ceo.lacounty.gov).

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JR:LC:MDC:tv

Attachment

c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors  
County Counsel  
Health Services  
Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority

## WEEKEND HOMELESS OUTREACH TEAMS 6-MONTH STATUS REPORT July 2020

### **Implementation Status: Weekend MDTs and HETs**

Effective May 15, 2018, funding was approved to add one weekend Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) and one weekend Homeless Engagement Team (HET) to each of the eight Service Planning Areas (SPAs) beginning October 1, 2018. Below is their current status:

- The implementation of full-time County-wide weekend HETs began in September 2018.
- The implementation of full-time County-wide weekend MDTs began on October 1, 2019, and they continue to be operational in all eight SPAs.

The weekend MDTs and weekend HETs closely collaborate to serve the weekend needs of each SPA.

As a result of the Governor's March 13, 2020, COVID-19 emergency declaration and the Los Angeles County *Safer at Home* order issued shortly thereafter, outreach capacity has been impacted. Some outreach team members are in categories of vulnerability, resulting in a small percentage of them assigned to telework. To mitigate the reduced outreach team workforce, the Department of Health Services (DHS) worked closely with the Chief Executive Office's Homeless Initiative and the Office of Emergency Management to deploy Los Angeles County Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) to build MDT capacity and maintain a robust street-based outreach workforce, seven days a week. Of the 39 DSW's embedded in the MDTs throughout Los Angeles (LA) County, seven provide weekend coverage in SPAs 2, 4 and 5.

As DHS moves forward with the implementation and expansion of COVID-19 testing and wellness checks in large encampments throughout the County, it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in COVID+ and COVID-exposed people experiencing homelessness (PEH) in those encampments who may "shelter in place". Each PEH who tests positive, has been exposed, or is significantly symptomatic, and who chooses to shelter in place will require a street-based daily wellness check for a period of 14 days. Outreach workers will continue to be the lifeline for the provision of this life-sustaining medical support, which also includes food distribution during this period. As implemented for the weekday MDTs, DHS is anticipating the need to further enrich the weekend MDTs by hiring Registered Nurses (RNs) and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) and embedding them within each Weekend MDT.

### **Weekend Outreach Collaboration and Capacity Building**

Both the Weekend MDT and HET teams continue to receive real-time supervision and support from their respective leadership. DHS has designated one Program Manager to work each Saturday to support the collaborative efforts of these teams; and, given the nature of current COVID response emergency needs, DHS also provides an assigned on-call program manager and testing coordinator as a resource for any emergent needs that arise on Sunday. The LAHSA Weekend HET teams are supported via a rotational access and engagement supervisory schedule. During this update period, DHS and LAHSA supervisory teams have collaborated on emergent situations that required a coordinated SPA weekend response.

Between November 2019 and March 2020, the DHS Program Manager conducted street-based outreach with every SPA MDT Weekend team at least once to identify strengths and technical

assistance needs. Based on this initial assessment, several SPA Weekend MDTs were provided additional face-to-face weekend technical assistance.

On February 2, 2020, DHS provided an opportunity for the South LA County Weekend MDTs in SPA's 5 - 8 to participate in a *Weekend Resource Collaboration*. This event explored outreach challenges and successes, reviewed weekend resources, and discussed overall strategies for weekend outreach. A *Mental Health First Aid for Weekend Outreach Teams* training was scheduled for March 14, 2020, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 emergency declaration.

Since the onset of the pandemic, technical assistance related to COVID-19 has been essential seven days a week. Crucial continuity of care needs addressed by weekend outreach teams include test result notification, follow-up from weekday COVID testing, daily wellness checks, and distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). The DHS Testing Program Manager provides daily technical assistance to all street-based outreach teams, including guidance and support for weekend outreach teams who are working with COVID positive PEH on the weekends.

For example, over Memorial Day weekend, three COVID positive tests were identified from weekday testing for unsheltered individuals located in both SPA 4 and SPA 7. The DHS Testing Program Manager and one additional DHS Program Manager provided an in-person response with these Weekend MDTs teams. One of the people in SPA 4 who tested positive was a 54-year-old Latina, symptomatic with a serious cough. On Sunday, May 24, 2020, the SPA 4 Weekend MDT nurse was able to locate her, provide test results, and assess symptoms, determining that she was stable. Declining quarantine/isolation due to fear, she was assisted by the team to develop a shelter in place safety plan that included daily MDT wellness checks for a period of 14 days and providing her a cell phone to call the team nurse, as needed.

On Sunday, May 31, 2020, the SPA 4 Weekend MDT was able to provide a COVID+ test notification to a 31-year-old Latino male living in an encampment with 25 other people. They were able to coordinate with County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to provide transportation to the Sobering Center quarantine/isolation site that same day.

The capacity for a seven-day outreach response has been critical in preserving the health and welfare of COVID+, COVID exposed and COVID vulnerable, unsheltered PEH, as well as, reducing the opportunity for community spread.

### **Weekend Outreach & Engagement**

The weekend outreach workforce is an essential component of providing continuity of care related to the needs of unsheltered/vulnerable PEH throughout LA County. This includes encountering PEH who work or attend school during weekdays, providing life-sustaining food and facilitating emergency medical and psychiatric crisis interventions. Additionally, in this unprecedented time of the COVID-19 pandemic, weekend outreach and the capacity to provide daily vital services is crucial.

LAHSA and Akido Labs, in partnership with DHS, developed a Smartphone Application (app) to help outreach teams triage COVID-19 symptoms and support people on the streets during the coronavirus pandemic. Named HOTSpot, the app was launched on April 20, 2020, among all outreach workers. This first-of-its-kind app allows outreach teams to do wellness checks, identify COVID-19 symptomatic and vulnerable PEH, and triage them to the most appropriate resource (e.g., 911, isolation/quarantine sites, Project Roomkey). It has become a vital tool in identifying and tracking where asymptomatic and COVID symptomatic individuals may be residing. This information allows MDT and LAHSA HET members to provide the appropriate level of support to

PEH across the County. As of May 31, 2020, 5,994 surveys were completed, including 200 by weekend outreach teams during the six weekends from April 25, 2020 to May 31, 2020.

Below are examples of COVID-related services provided by the MDT and HET teams, seven days a week:

- Conduct COVID-19 education and triage for symptoms utilizing the Akido HOTSpot application;
- Provide street-based daily wellness checks with COVID+ positive, COVID exposed, and symptomatic individuals sheltering in place;
- Alert PEH of their test results in a timely manner;
- Coordinate quarantine/isolation bed placement for COVID+, COVID exposed and COVID symptomatic unsheltered PEH;
- Coordinate placements in Project Roomkey (PRK) and other interim housing serving COVID -vulnerable unsheltered PEH;
- Provide food and water to unsheltered PEH, some of whom are sheltering in place;
- Provide life-sustaining resources such as PPE and hygiene products for infection control; and
- Provide crisis intervention and coordination of response for emergency health and psychiatric care needs.

Providing vital daily resources for PEH is critical, especially during this pandemic. Through partnerships with World Central Kitchen and Sky Chef, the MDT's and LAHSA HET teams have been able to provide meals seven days a week for unsheltered PEH. Since April 20, 2020, more than 80,000 meals have been distributed by outreach teams; 3,800 of which were delivered via weekend outreach teams.

Highlights from weekend outreach and engagement efforts in each SPA are provided below:

#### **SPA 1**

- Mental Health America Los Angeles (MHALA) Weekend MDT provides proactive outreach, which includes delivering meals and water to people experiencing homelessness in isolated desert encampments who otherwise would have zero access to these essentials.
- Weekend MDTs also save lives. The weekend team encountered a young woman standing on the train tracks with a plan to commit suicide. The team engaged her, talked her off the tracks, and coordinated an emergency response which assisted in providing the mental health intervention she needed.
- Another individual was found by the team bleeding in his tent, as his toes had been amputated due to diabetes. The Weekend MDT nurse was able to provide emergency wound care and eventually assisted this individual to be placed into Project Roomkey (PRK).
- Emergency transportation and hospitalization was coordinated by the weekend team for a gentleman found severely dehydrated in his tent after the team nurse identified he had taken his medication incorrectly.

#### **SPA 2**

- Significant COVID-19 outbreaks have resulted in increased testing, notification of test results, "shelter in place" safety planning, and daily wellness checks throughout the SPA. The LA Family Housing (LAFH) Weekend MDT, which includes a Northeast Valley Health Corporation Nurse Practitioner, has been essential in sustaining these efforts, including providing COVID-19 testing, seven days a week.

- The Weekend MDT has been a critical force in identifying and placing vulnerable individuals experiencing homelessness into safety; reporting that in one weekend alone, a total of 61 people from an encampment located at the Paxton/Bradley intersection in Pacoima, were placed into PRK.

### SPA 3

- All four Union Station Homeless Services (USHS) MDTs and two Public Space teams work one weekend day every other week, allowing them to follow up with existing clients, as well as, with clients assigned to other teams across the SPA who need daily wellness checks and other life-sustaining interventions.
- The weekend teams are also providing COVID-19 screenings in the field, via the Akido App, and have made several referrals during their weekend outreach.
- For over three years, LAHSA HET teams have been engaging a 55-year-old medically vulnerable female experiencing homelessness. It was initially difficult for her to place trust in outreach teams, but through the relationship building efforts by the weekend HET team, she was eventually placed in the Hacienda Heights PRK site, where she is doing well.

### SPA 4

- As of Friday, June 5, 2020, there were ten COVID+ individuals sheltering in place throughout the SPA who required daily MDT wellness checks by The People Concern (TPC) and Exodus Recovery collaborative Weekend MDT. One of these individuals is a 44-year old Latino male who lives under the 2 Freeway with his 35-year-old pregnant partner who has not had pre-natal care. In addition to conducting their daily wellness check, the Weekend MDT planned to accompany her to the LAC+USC OB/GYN Walk-In clinic for the health care she needs.
- Meals for 100 people experiencing homelessness are provided by the SPA 4 team every weekend.

### SPA 5

- St. Joseph Center (SJC) Weekend MDT identified an increased ability to locate vulnerable individuals with critical service needs on the weekend despite them not being found during the week. As a result, the weekend team has played a critical role in transporting and enrolling individuals into SPA 5 PRK locations.
- A weekend HET member noticed that an individual on the street was overdosing. Fortunately, LAHSA had provided Narcan training to their outreach teams and a weekend HET member was able to immediately administer Narcan while the other HET member called 911. The overdose was reversed, and the HET members waited with the individual until paramedics arrived. A life was saved that day.

### SPA 6

- On Sunday, November 24, 2019, and after four years of homelessness, Mr. F, a 67-year-old African -American male, met the SPA 6 Homeless Outreach Integrated Care System (HOPICS) Weekend MDT. He was living in his non-operating car at the Burger Palace near Florence and Western in South Los Angeles. After months of engagement, Mr. F finally agreed to services and was provided a hotel room, clean clothes, food and transportation to and from appointments to re-establish mental and physical health care. On February 6, 2020, and while residing in the hotel, Mr. F. was able to obtain a bed via the CES Enhanced Bridge Housing Older Adults care system. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. F. was matched through the CES system to the Athens Senior Homes in Los Angeles. As he anticipated this move, Mr. F remarked, "I'm so happy, I have not had my own place in 35 years."

**SPA 7**

- People Assisting the Homeless (PATH) Weekend MDT reports significant success in facilitating interim housing placements for individuals they serve. This has included placing eight people residing at Thompson Park in Bellflower and ten people from the Butterfly encampment in South Gate into interim housing.
- Since the onset of COVID-19, the SPA 7 Weekend MDT has placed 20 people into PRK rooms, placed five people into substance use detox, and continued to provide daily continuity of care for individuals served by weekday teams.
- While conducting weekend outreach, the HET team encountered an older woman who appeared in need of supportive services, which at the time were not being provided. The team approached to assist and learned she resided in a Sober Living Home in Riverside. The Whittier Police Department and HET team were able to connect with the Sober Living Home who expressed concern and reported that this individual had been missing for several weeks. In the spirit of "whatever it takes", the weekend HET team accompanied her to the Sober Living Home, reuniting her with the safety of her home.

**SPA 8**

Meeting the MHALA Weekend MDT was the turning point for Vincent, a 63-year-old white male who reported that he had been homeless for over 16 years. First encountered by outreach teams in January 2018, Vincent was a victim of "homeless bashing" and had motor oil poured over him. Vincent was hospitalized for his injuries and moved to Long Beach following his discharge from the hospital. When the Weekend MDT was implemented, Vincent was added to their weekend outreach list and through these additional contacts, the Weekend MDT was eventually able to gain Vincent's trust, who stated "you guys must really care about me, no one else would ever come out on the weekend". On Saturday, May 16, 2020, the Weekend MDT assisted Vincent with the lease signing for his new apartment. They also utilized the team's truck to help Vincent move all his belongings to his new unit.

**Weekend MDT & HET Outcomes**

<b>WEEKEND MDT &amp; HET OUTCOMES</b>				
October 1, 2019 - March 31, 2020				
	<b>WEEKEND OUTCOMES</b>	<b>LAHSA HET Teams</b>	<b>DHS MDT Teams</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
1	Number of unduplicated individuals initiated contact	705	549	1,254
2	Number of Number of unduplicated individuals first engaged by the weekend teams	254	195	449
3	Number of unduplicated engaged individuals who received services or referrals by the weekend teams (including individuals first engaged by weekend teams and individuals first engaged by weekday teams)	411	554	965
4	Number of services and referrals provided to individuals contacted or engaged	4,344	5,723	10,087
5	Number of unduplicated individuals who were placed in crisis or bridge housing	77	83	160
6	Number of unduplicated individuals who were linked to a permanent housing resource	19	37	56
7	Number of unduplicated individuals who were placed in permanent housing*	8	41	49

\*Permanent housing placement includes all clients who were housed during the reporting period and had any weekend service during that same period.

<b>WEEKEND MDT &amp; HET COVID-19 SERVICES</b>			
April 1, 2020 – May 31, 2020			
<b>Weekend Services**</b>	<b>LAHSA HET Teams</b>	<b>DHS MDT Teams</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
Total COVID Services and Referrals	1,059	475	1,534
• COVID Education	349	131	480
• Referral - COVID Hotline	33	23	56
• Referral - COVID Interim Housing	229	67	296
• Referral - COVID Isolation Beds	44	1	45
• Referral - COVID Testing	24	39	63
• Other COVID Services & Referrals	380	214	594

\*\*MDTs implemented COVID-19 services in HMIS on 4/20/2020.